



# Northern Border Regional Commission



## Draft 2017-2021 Strategic Plan July, 2016

Public comment accepted through August 15, 2016 at [www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov)

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## Executive Summary

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) is a partnership between the federal government and the states Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont. Created by the 2008 Farm Bill, the NBRC targets resources to promote economic growth strategies and projects in the northern areas of its member states.

The Commission is composed of a Federal Co-Chair appointed by the President and confirmed by the United States Senate, and the governors of each state in the region or their appointed alternates.

This strategic plan for 2017-2021 will guide the Commission's programs and investments as it seeks to help the Northern Border region emerge from a period of significant economic transition and challenge. The Commission's strategies are designed to capitalize on regional assets to grow and retain wealth in the region, and are informed by local priorities identified by public, private, and not-for-profit stakeholders.

By investing in projects that address shared regional challenges and catalyze common opportunities, the NBRC plays a critical role in helping Northern Border communities retool their economies for the future. The Northern Border region is poised for economic revitalization if it can modernize its infrastructure, invest in business and workforce development, and build its capacity for community economic development. The NBRC is uniquely positioned to make these pivotal improvements possible.

### Strategic Plan Highlights

**Regional Vision:** The Northern Border Regional Commission works to help achieve a future in which:

*The Northern Border region is known for its vital regional economies and thriving communities that provide for the well-being of the region's residents and support the stewardship of the region's natural and cultural assets.*

**Mission:** The mission of the Northern Border Regional Commission is to catalyze regional, collaborative, and transformative community economic development approaches that alleviate economic distress and position the region for economic growth.

### **Investment Principles**

In determining its investment priorities, the Commission is guided by the following principles:

- Invest for long-term community and economic impact;
- Support local initiatives that contribute to regional solutions;
- Encourage integrative approaches to building economic, community, and environmental well-being;

- Capitalize on local and regional assets to grow and retain wealth in the region;
- Use NBRC resources to fill gaps in the region's funding environment for community economic development; and
- Stimulate and integrate the capacity and resources of other partners and funders.

### **Strategic Goals & Objectives: 2017—2021**

**Goal #1. Infrastructure in Northern Border communities is modernized to better support business retention and expansion, and better position the region to compete in the global economy.**

- Objective 1.1: Community infrastructure for business development. *Revitalize and modernize essential infrastructure in Northern Border region communities.*
- Objective 1.2: Telecommunications. *Increase access, affordability, and use of high speed telecommunications by Northern Border residents and businesses.*
- Objective 1.3: Energy. *Stabilize and reduce electric and thermal energy costs.*

**Goal #2. Businesses in the Northern Border region are creating and sustaining jobs and wealth from the region's assets and are able to find employees with necessary skills.**

- Objective 2.1: Asset-based business enterprise. *Retain, expand and diversify business enterprise that capitalizes on the region's natural, cultural, and economic assets.*
- Objective 2.2: Entrepreneurship and Innovation. *Position the Northern Border region as an attractive and supportive place for creative and entrepreneurial people.*
- Objective 2.3: Workforce development. *Support and expand a highly productive workforce with skills suited to existing and future business needs.*

**Goal #3: Northern Border communities and businesses are well positioned to anticipate and capitalize on changing trends, and are resilient in the face of change.**

- Objective 3.1: Leadership & community capacity. *Foster entrepreneurial leadership and capacity for community economic development.*
- Objective 3.2: Regional knowledge. *Inform and align local, state, and regional economic development decision making with regional data and perspectives.*

### **Five Year Performance Goals**

Assuming consistent annual funding, the Commission will gauge its success and impact against its strategic goals and objectives between 2017 and 2021 with these performance measures:

- 5,000 jobs created or retained
- 10,000 households and businesses with access to improved infrastructure
- 1,000 businesses representing 5,000 employees benefit from NBRC investments
- 7,500 workers provided with skills training
- 250 communities and 1,000 leaders engaged in regional leadership, learning and/or innovation networks supported by the NBRC
- 3:1 NBRC investment leverage

# Introduction

## **The Northern Border Regional Commission**

The 2008 Farm Bill created the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) to help address the community and economic development needs of the most severely distressed portions of the Northeastern United States. The NBRC is a federal-state regional commission that targets resources to stimulate economic growth strategies and projects in the northern areas of Maine, New Hampshire, New York and Vermont.

The NBRC's service region is rural and heavily forested, and its economy has historically depended on natural-resource based industries such as pulp and paper production. In the past 30 years, however, these industries have changed dramatically as efficiency grew, demand for traditional products declined, and production shifted to lower-cost regions of the world. The NBRC was established in part to address the challenges created by these economic shifts, and to serve as a catalyst to help alleviate economic distress and position the region for new economic opportunities, stabilization and growth.

The Commission is a partnership between the federal government and the Northern Border states, designed to deliver targeted and strategic federal investment into the region to help address priorities identified at the state and local levels. The Commission is composed of a Federal Co-Chair appointed by the President and confirmed by the United States Senate, and the governors of each state in the region or their appointed alternates. Policy and funding decisions of the commission require the affirmative vote of the Federal Co-Chair and a majority of the four Governors.

The NBRC's multi-state vantage point and capacity for catalytic investment position it to help the region's communities learn from each other and replicate success as they face common challenges and act on common opportunities. The Commission's investment strategies are informed by local priorities identified by public, private, and not-for-profit stakeholders and designed to capitalize on regional assets to grow and retain wealth in the region.

The Commission's *Economic & Infrastructure Development Investment* program has made grants to economic development projects across the region since 2010. The NBRC has played an especially valuable role as a "first in" source of grant capital that can attract and match other federal and state sources. In small, rural communities, this flexible approach is critical.

## **Northern Border Regional Commission Strategic Plan**

In its early years, the investments of NBRC were guided by the 2008 recommendations of the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative, a federally-funded regional economic assessment and strategy process led by the Northern Forest Center with support from the region's governors. In 2014, the Commission contracted with the Northern Forest Center to

update that strategy as the basis for this strategic plan. The Northern Forest Center is a regional non-profit with a service area nearly identical to that of the NBRC.

This plan is informed by extensive engagement with NBRC stakeholders across the region and grounded in local, state, and regional economic development strategies already in place. This work included the following in 2015-2016:

- Interviews and conversations with over 200 regional stakeholders across all four states;
- Comprehensive review of existing economic development plans and strategies across the region, including Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs) and other regional development strategies, the Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative, and other relevant plans;
- Participation in economic development forums around the region;
- Assessment of strategic plans developed by other federal-state regional development commissions;
- A regional socioeconomic assessment commissioned from the New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies;
- A November 2015 conference of regional stakeholders; and
- Input from the NBRC federal co-chair and state members.

This plan marries the results of the stakeholder engagement and information collection with the NBRC statute (40 U.S.C, Subtitle V) to create a program and investment strategy that reflects the unique challenges and opportunities of the Northern Border Region and the economic priorities of its member states and communities.

### **The Northern Border Region**

*A Shared History.* The Northern Border region encompasses 1,100 towns and small cities and 36 counties across the northern reaches of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Home to over 2 million people and the largest intact forest east of the Mississippi, the Northern Border region has been shaped over the centuries by the interactions between people and land and, more recently, a focus on conserving the landscape and developing the economy in tandem.

In the 1800s the region's farms and forests provided the raw materials that built some of Northeast's largest cities. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century new industries emerged and the region was known globally as the birthplace of modern pulp and paper making, with whole communities built around massive mills that employed tens of thousands across the region. During the same era, the region established itself as a premier recreation destination, drawing millions of visitors to enjoy its mountains, lakes, and fresh air.

In more recent decades, global economic pressures have caused forest-based industries to shed tens of thousands of jobs, altered markets for the region's products and services, and spurred land speculation and continuous land sales. Like many rural parts of America, the Northern

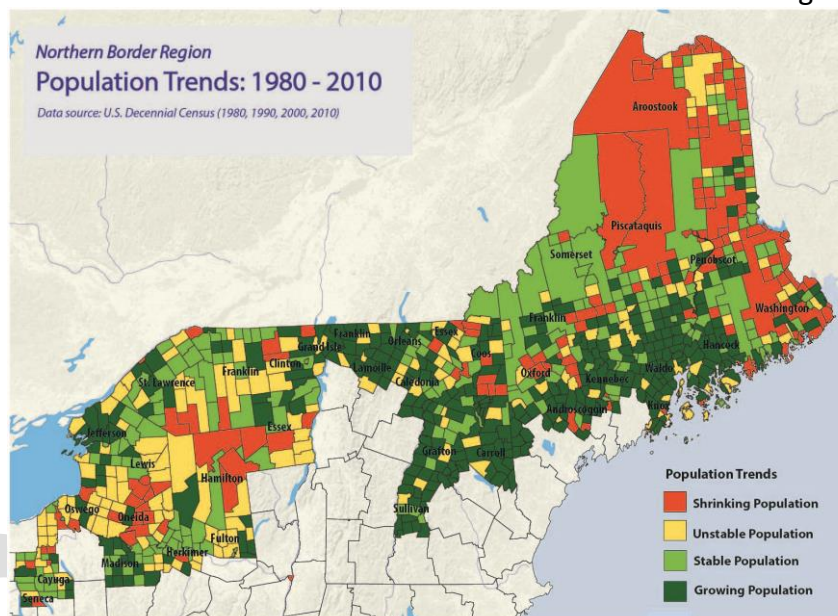
Border region is grappling with a changing economy and a transition from manufacturing dependence to a more diversified, service-driven economy.

In this context, the Northern Border Regional Commission plays a critical role in helping Northern Border communities retool their economies for the future.

**Current Socioeconomic Trends.** The social and economic circumstances of the Northern Border region are diverse, and yet a number of common trends are shared across much of the region.

- **Population shifts.**

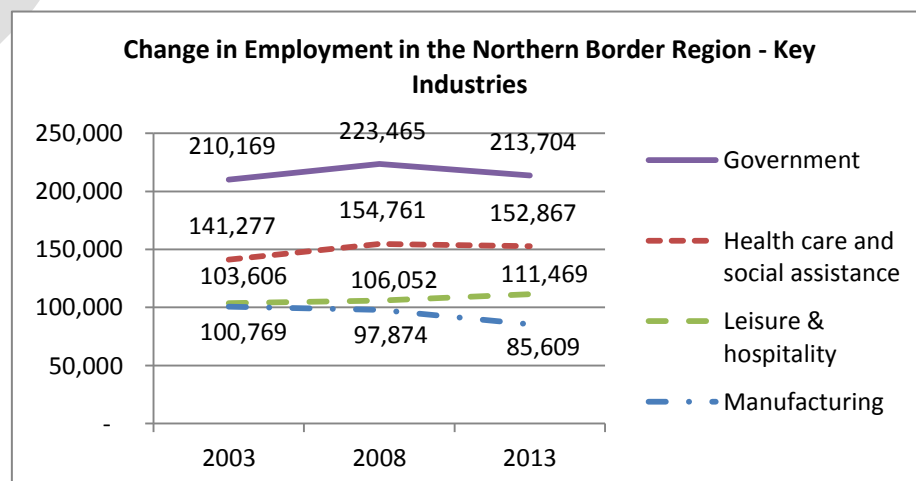
After several decades of change, overall population has stabilized in much of the Northern Forest, but the major extraction-based manufacturing communities and remote areas continue to lose population. Population is growing most quickly in percentage terms in recreation-based communities, but in terms of sheer numbers of people, most population growth is in communities whose economies are based on state/federal employment or services.



- **Aging population.** The Northern Border region as a whole is slightly older than the southern tiers of its member states, and its population is aging more quickly. Between 2003 and 2013, the share of the population over the age of 65 increased by almost 22%. These changes are occurring primarily because of low birth rates and because people are ‘aging in place,’ but also because these communities are having difficulty retaining younger people. This has important implications for the economy, as human capital is one of the principal forces behind economic development.

- **Diversifying economy.**

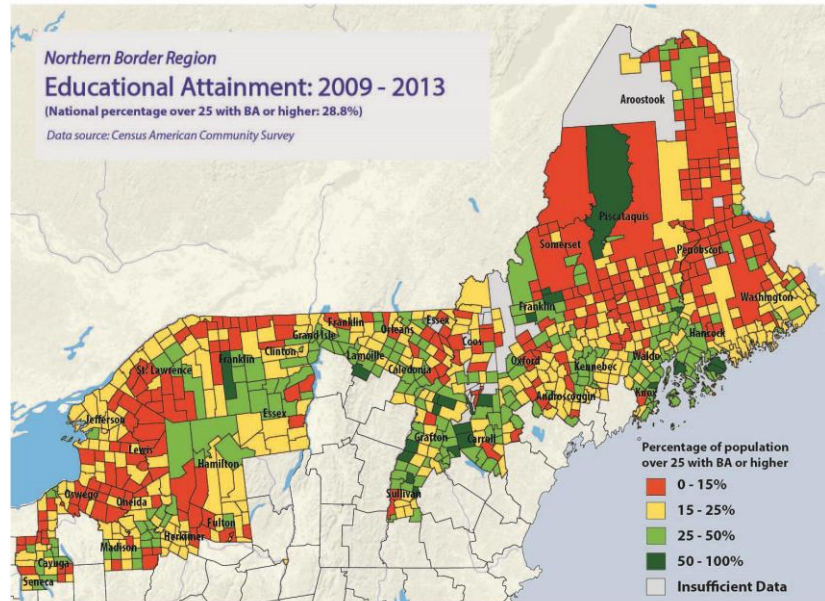
Across the United States, health care, social assistance and government account for an ever increasing share of the national economy, with manufacturing on





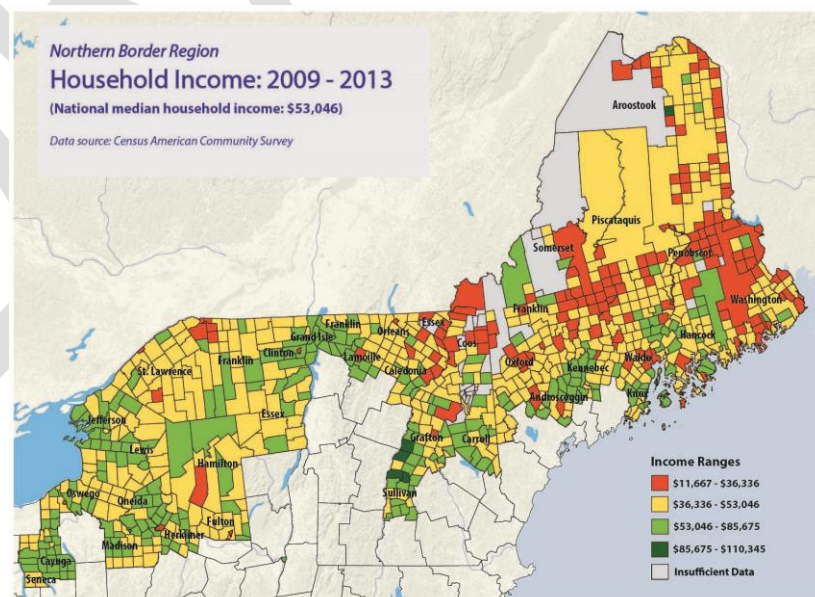
the decline. The Northern Border region is no different. Manufacturing's contribution to the regional economy (as measured by worker compensation), while still significant, declined by 16% between 2003 and 2013, as contributions from the government, health care and social assistance, and leisure and hospitality sectors grew.

- Changing workforce needs. Today's economy demands a very different type of skill set than in the past. Many of the region's historic manufacturing communities have levels of college education well below the national average, reflecting a time when getting a well-paying job in a mill required a high school diploma



and a willingness to work. As high-skill work becomes more important in all sectors of the economy, a significant segment of the region's workforce is at a disadvantage, mismatched with the needs of many existing and potential new businesses.

- Distressed communities. A challenging combination of job and population loss, decaying infrastructure, and low economic diversification has left many of the region's historic population centers grappling with low income and high rates of poverty. Distress is most apparent in parts of the region that were historically dependent on manufacturing, and/or that are most remote.





*Regional Opportunity.* While at the macro level the socioeconomic context of the Northern Border region is challenging, there are many bright spots of opportunity across the landscape:

- The region's natural asset base remains intact, providing raw materials for industry as well as natural amenities that are drawing residents and businesses to the region.
- Northern Border communities offer many appealing characteristics—small size, safety, a strong sense of community, and a beautiful landscape—to build on.
- The region's proximity to markets and major population hubs—Boston, New York, Montreal and others—ideally positions it to provide products and recreational experiences that can compete in the global economy.

The Northern Border Regional Commission is uniquely positioned to help the region capitalize on its promising qualities. Strategic investments to modernize infrastructure, strengthen business and workforce development, and build capacity for community economic development, planning, and implementation will revitalize the Northern Border region's economy.

### *[SIDEBAR] Profiles of Economic Transition*

Most of the Northern Border region is also known as the Northern Forest, and the historic economy was built on forest-based industry. In the 1800s and for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the region was home to hundreds of wood products mills, producing pulp and paper, lumber and other wood products. These industries supported tens of thousands of jobs, and led to the creation of many of the region's communities.

The stories of these communities put faces and places to the socioeconomic trends and challenges that inform the work of the NBRC. Once thriving communities centered around manufacturing facilities, these places now grapple with a shrinking and aging population, low family incomes, higher than average poverty, and low numbers of college graduates.

Lyons Falls, NY. A paper mill anchored the economy of Lyons Falls for over a century. When it closed in 2001—at a cost of 192 jobs—it was the second largest employer in Lewis County. Today the community is slowly demolishing the blighted buildings, and planning to repurpose the site for new uses.

Northeast Kingdom, VT. Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans counties form Vermont's Northeast Kingdom (NEK). Once a hub of furniture making and other industry, the region lost over 1,000 jobs in forest and wood products between 2001 and 2009 as manufacturers like Ethan Allan consolidated their operations. Alongside traditional forest products, today's NEK economy is evolving to include a focus on recreation and agriculture.

Berlin, NH. "The City that Trees Built" was New Hampshire's 4<sup>th</sup> largest city in 1930, home to several pulp and paper mills that employed thousands and led the industry in innovation. By 2008, the mills were gone, and the city population had declined by over 50%. Today Berlin is reinventing itself, in part around renewable energy and motorized recreation.

Millinocket, Maine. The Great Northern Paper company literally built the city of Millinocket in 1899 to house the workforce for its mills. At their peak, the mills employed 4,000 people in the best-paying manufacturing jobs in Maine. The last of these facilities closed its doors for good in 2014. Millinocket and neighboring towns now face a challenge like many Northern Border communities before them—to reinvent their forest-based economy and diversify for the future.

## Regional Strategy, 2017-2021

**Regional Vision:** The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) aims to help achieve a future in which:

*The Northern Border region is known for its vital regional economies and thriving communities that provide for the well-being of the region's residents and support the stewardship of the region's natural and cultural assets.*

This is a vision not just of the NBRC, but one articulated in community economic development strategies across the region.

**Mission:** The mission of the Northern Border Regional Commission is to catalyze regional, collaborative, and transformative community economic development approaches that alleviate economic distress and position the region for economic growth.

### Investment Principles

In determining its investment priorities, the Commission is guided by the following principles:

- Invest for long-term community and economic impact;
- Support local initiatives that contribute to regional solutions;
- Encourage integrative approaches to building economic, community, and environmental well-being;
- Capitalize on local and regional assets to grow and retain wealth in the region;
- Use NBRC resources to fill gaps in the region's funding environment for community economic development; and
- Stimulate and integrate the capacity and resources of other partners and funders.

### NBRC Roles

The NBRC works to achieve its mission and act on its investment principles through four primary roles, which it delivers directly and also through its grants and partnerships:

- *Investor.* The NBRC uses its grant resources to catalyze transformative community and business development projects, and brokers public-private investment strategies to leverage its impact.
- *Partner.* The NBRC works with—and in support of—local, state and regional partners to identify and advance regional development priorities.
- *Advocate.* The NBRC is an advocate for the needs and opportunities of the Northern Border region within federal and state agencies to bring enhanced attention and resources to the region.
- *Connector.* The NBRC connects community and business development leaders and their ideas across the region to extend the reach of good ideas and accelerate economic opportunities.

## **Strategic Goals & Objectives: 2017—2021**

NBRC program and investment decisions between 2017 and 2021 will be prioritized to address the following strategic goals and objectives, which are informed by common priorities identified at the local and state level. This framework is designed to ensure the strategic impact of the Commission's work while respecting the diverse and ever-evolving community economic development needs of the region.

### **Goal #1. Infrastructure in Northern Border communities is modernized to better support business retention and expansion, and better position the region to compete in the global economy.**

Modern infrastructure is a keystone for successful economic development. Most of the Northern Border region's 1,100 communities were built over a century ago and are challenged to function with community infrastructure that is many decades old. In addition to these local needs, the region must also invest in infrastructure that helps it overcome two fundamental challenges to economic growth: high energy costs and poor access to high speed telecommunications.

#### **Objective 1.1: Community infrastructure for business development**

*Revitalize and modernize essential infrastructure in Northern Border region communities.*

Community infrastructure (water and sewer and other utilities, transportation, housing, and community facilities such as schools and hospitals) in many Northern Border communities is antiquated, in some cases over a century old. Furthermore, infrastructure in many community centers was built for a population far larger than what exists today. Coupled with declining tax base and public budgets, the result in many communities is infrastructure that is poorly suited to retaining and attracting businesses, residents and visitors.

#### **Selected Strategies:**

- Make strategic, highly leveraged investments in basic infrastructure projects—water and sewer, other utilities, and transportation—that support specific community economic development goals.
- Support downtown revitalization efforts tied to business retention and attraction objectives.

Create or enhance business development sites, community facilities, and housing to support the retention and attraction of new businesses and residents.

#### **Objective 1.2: Telecommunications**

*Increase access, affordability, and use of high speed telecommunications by Northern Border residents and businesses.*

Affordable, reliable, and high-speed broadband and cellular access is a prerequisite for virtually any business. It is also fundamental for current and potential new residents in Northern Border communities. The Federal Communications Commission defines broadband as a minimum download speed of 25 Mbps and minimum upload speed of 3 Mbps. While internet access has improved in the region in the last decade, in many places it still falls far short of the modern broadband standard. Large swaths of the Northern Border region lack access to wired broadband service (DSL, cable, or other wired lines). A smaller but still significant portion of the region lacks access to mobile data service. Customers in many areas have access to only 1 provider (little redundancy) or slow (<1 Mbps) download speeds.

Selected Strategies:

- Make strategic investments in telecommunications infrastructure projects to improve the upload/download speed, reliability and cost of wired and wireless broadband access, with a particular emphasis on service to population centers.
- Provide technical assistance to enable businesses, communities, and educational institutions in the region to take better advantage of telecommunications technologies.

**Objective 1.3: Energy**

*Stabilize and reduce electric and thermal energy costs and increase.*

Energy costs in the Northern Border region are some of the most expensive in the U.S. In the lower 48 states, New York has the most expensive commercial electric costs. Vermont ranks 5<sup>th</sup>, New Hampshire 6<sup>th</sup> and Maine 9<sup>th</sup> highest. For thermal energy, the Northern Border region is largely un-served by natural gas and relies on fuel oil and bottled/liquid gas for the bulk of its heating. As a result, the region is subject to radical swings in heating costs as markets respond to fossil fuel availability, world events and winter weather. Overall, unpredictable and often expensive energy costs are a significant barrier to economic development in the region.

Selected Strategies:

- Improve the energy efficiency of public facilities to decrease and stabilize overall energy costs.
- Support high-efficiency, distributed generation projects that increase use of clean indigenous fuels (wood and other biomass, water, wind, solar, geothermal, hydroelectric).
- Encourage cooperative energy efficiency and/or generation projects that reduce business energy costs.



**Goal #2. Businesses in the Northern Border region are creating and sustaining jobs and wealth from the region's assets and are able to find employees with necessary skills.**

The region's natural, social, cultural and other assets can serve as a strong foundation for business creation. Yet as the region diversifies the economy built around these assets, it must strategically invest in creating a fertile environment for entrepreneurship and develop the workforce that will enable these new ventures to thrive.

**Objective 2.1: Asset-based business enterprise**

*Retain, expand and diversify business enterprise that capitalizes on the region's natural, cultural, and economic assets.*

The Northern Border economy was historically heavily dependent on manufacturing, particularly pulp and paper, but these jobs have declined by over 50% since the 1970s. While employment numbers have grown in leisure and hospitality, healthcare and social services, and government, these jobs have not replaced the wages and wealth creation that manufacturing once derived from the region's significant indigenous assets. These assets remain in place, however, providing a basis to build a significant scale of economic impact where the region finds particular advantage.

Selected Strategies:

- Provide technical and financial assistance to help existing and new businesses enhance their competitiveness and capitalize on the region's cultural, economic and natural assets.
- Build demand and/or markets for Northern Border region products and services.
- Support regional planning and economic development efforts that promote good stewardship of the region's natural resource base.

**Objective 2.2: Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

*Position the Northern Border region as an attractive and supportive place for creative and entrepreneurial people.*

The Northern Border economy is transitioning from a reliance on a small number of large employers to reliance on greater numbers of small- and medium-sized businesses. The region's population is also aging, creating a pressing need to refresh and strengthen the pipeline of business leaders. The region has many assets that can be leveraged to attract entrepreneurial people, including strong institutions of higher learning, quality of life, proximity to markets, and competitive advantages in a number of specific sectors. The challenge is to knit these assets together, fill gaps, and create entrepreneurial networks and support systems that create the conditions for entrepreneurs to thrive.

#### Selected Strategies:

- Support entrepreneurship and business creation and retention through business-succession support, enhanced entrepreneurial networks, incubators/entrepreneurial work spaces, innovative capital, and other strategies.
- Support the ability of entrepreneurs to access and commercialize technologies and business concepts generated by the region's public and private R&D institutions.

#### **Objective 2.3: Workforce development**

*Support and expand a highly productive workforce with skills suited to existing and future business needs.*

Unemployment and underemployment is high in many parts of the region, and yet many businesses report challenges in finding workers with the skills they need. With an aging workforce developed around a manufacturing economy that is now significantly diminished, and few new people coming in to the region, the region is challenged to improve the skills and productivity of existing workers, rather than just increase the number of jobs. To keep pace with a rapidly evolving regional and global economy, training opportunities must be continuous and meet workers where they are, whether preparing to enter the workforce for the first time, in a job already, or displaced.

#### Selected Strategies:

- Strengthen connections between research labs, educational institutions, and other R&D facilities and the business community to increase commercialization and intellectual transfer.
- Provide skills training in targeted industry sectors (as identified by local/regional plans).
- Accelerate adoption of new technologies and business practices to enhance productivity.
- Support workforce training programs with local businesses.

**Goal #3: Northern Border communities and businesses are well positioned to anticipate and capitalize on changing trends, and are resilient in the face of change.**

In the small, rural communities that characterize much of the Northern Border region, community economic development efforts are usually led by volunteer elected officials, small business leaders, local non-profits, or even individual citizens. Their ability to capitalize on new opportunities is often limited by leadership development, access to professional expertise, and lack of information. Addressing these capacity gaps is a crucial and yet often overlooked ingredient in successful community development.

### **Objective 3.1: Leadership & community capacity**

*Foster entrepreneurial leadership and capacity for community economic development.*

Unlike an earlier era, when large corporations provided financial capital to build business, wealth, and employment in the Northern Border region, the next generation of economic development is being led by smaller, locally grown businesses and civic organizations. In a fast-moving global marketplace, however, rural business and community leaders are often challenged to find the information, connections, and support needed to adequately tackle the challenges before them, and to develop the continuum of leadership that will sustain success.

#### **Selected Strategies:**

- Provide professional training and capacity building for organizations and institutions that support development and implementation of community economic development plans and strategies.
- Support opportunities to inform, and connect entrepreneurial community leaders across the region.
- Support regional collaborations, networks and other strategies that accelerate the adoption of successful economic development strategies across the region.

### **Objective 3.2: Regional knowledge**

*Inform and align local, state, and regional economic development decision making with regional data and perspectives.*

Creating vital economies and communities for the Northern Border region requires quick and continuous adaptation to numerous trends and realities, many of them external to the region. Further, in a global economy, regions have become a locus of effective economic development due to their ability to offer a diversity of people, knowledge institutions, land base, and services to businesses. Responding to macro trends and operating with a regional frameset, however, requires capacity beyond the reach of individual communities and even states.

#### **Selected Strategies:**

- Support regional data synthesis and communication of regional trends to inform regional state, and local economic development efforts.
- Document and communicate of community economic development best practices with broad applicability in the Northern Border region.
- Support regional and state-level economic development planning.

### **[Sidebar: Turning Regional Assets into Community Revitalization Success]**

Across the Northern Border region, a number of communities and businesses are using local assets to revitalize local communities in innovative ways. The NBRC helped to sponsor a regional conference in 2015 that highlighted a number of these successes:

- After a devastating fire, community leaders in Hardwick, Vermont worked with local lenders and residents to reopen businesses quickly, and focus on increasing “local food” markets. Today, 75 businesses are flourishing, employment is up by nearly 6 percent, and the average annual wage is 4 percent higher than the regional average.
- The Model Neighborhood Wood Heat Initiative, which operates in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and northern New York, has combined local wood with modern technology to create \$3.6 million in economic impact.
- Coös County, New Hampshire, is now home to 1,000 miles of interconnected ATV trails—the largest systems in the Northeast, attracting thousands of visitors from 32 states.
- A community-owned forest in Errol, New Hampshire, has generated \$3.7 million in timber sales through sustainable forest management and will net \$100,000 annually to the town budget over time.
- Essex County, New York, has become an incubation hub for agriculture businesses, attracting young entrepreneurs and reversing a decline in the local ag economy.
- A Vermont initiative focused on the working-lands economy has created 106 jobs and increased aggregated gross income 10x for participating businesses.
- Small towns have created and branded local promotional events like a hiking challenge (Saranac Lake, New York) or a jack-o’-lantern festival (Littleton, New Hampshire) to draw thousands of new visitors to their downtowns and the surrounding region.
- In and around Millinocket, Maine the group Our Katahdin has crowdsourced \$50,000 in investment for “small win” community development projects.
- Vermont’s Kingdom Trails Bike Association drew nearly 70,000 mountain bike user visits in 2014, with each visit leaving \$100 in the regional economy.

## Impact & Evaluation

*Five Year Performance Goals.* The NBRC is committed to accountability and to documenting the impact of its work both quantitatively and qualitatively. Assuming consistent annual funding levels, the Commission will gauge its success and impact against its strategic goals and objectives between 2017 and 2021 with these performance measures:

- Goal #1: Infrastructure:
  - 10,000 households and businesses with access to improved infrastructure
- Goal #2: Business & Workforce Development:
  - 1,000 businesses representing 5,000 employees benefit from NBRC investments
  - 7,500 workers provided with skills training
- Goal #3: Regional Leadership:
  - 250 communities and 1,000 leaders engaged in regional leadership, learning and/or innovation networks supported by the NBRC

In addition, across all its goals and objectives the commission aims to achieve:

- 5,000 jobs created or retained
- 3:1 NBRC investment leverage

The Commission will also annually publish success stories stemming from its programs to highlight the impact and stories that go beyond the numbers.

*Indicators of Regional Progress.* The Commission's five year performance goals are designed to measure the direct impacts of NBRC programs and investments. Of equal priority, however, is understanding the overall "state of the region" and whether as a whole the Northern Border region and the communities within it are improving their socioeconomic condition over time.

To this end, the NBRC updates annually its measures of economic distress, which include: poverty, unemployment, population change, educational attainment, median household income, and seasonal home percentage. Annual distress listings and data can be found on the NBRC website at [www.nbrc.gov](http://www.nbrc.gov).

In the future, the Commission hopes to partner with other regional organizations to develop a more comprehensive regional indicators framework that can inform the Commission and other economic development investors in the region about the overall health of the region.



## **Appendix 1. Plans & Strategies Consulted**

### **Multi-State**

- Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Initiative Strategy & Recommendations, October 2008
- Northeast CanAm Connections: Integrating the Economy and Transportation. August, 2009

### **Maine Regional**

- Androscoggin Valley CEDS, June 2014 (AVCOG)
- Aroostook-Washington CEDS, April 2015 (NMDC)
- Eastern Maine CEDS (EMDC)
- Kennebec Valley CEDS, June 2013 (KVCOG)
- Midcoast CEDS, 2014 (MCEDD)

### **Maine Statewide**

- Economic Strategy for Maine, January 2013. Maine State Chamber of Commerce.
- Making Maine Work: Critical Investments for the Maine Economy. 2010 (Maine State Chamber of Commerce and the Maine Development Foundation)
- Making Maine Work: Critical investments for the Maine economy: Growing Maine's workforce. October, 2013. (Maine State Chamber of Commerce and the Maine Development Foundation)
- Measures of Growth, 2015. (Maine Development Foundation, Maine Economic Growth Council)
- Regional Quality of Place Investment Strategies: A Guide for Economic Development Districts. 2011. (Maine Quality of Place Council)

### **New Hampshire Regional**

- A Plan for New Hampshire's North Country, Regional Plan for the North Country Council Planning Region. (North Country Council)
- Broadband in Coos County, New Hampshire Preliminary Report, March 2016. University of New Hampshire.
- Coos Economic Action Plan
- Neil & Louse Tillotson Fund Strategic Plan 2016-2021
- North Country CEDS (North Country Council)

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission Draft Regional Plan

### **New Hampshire Statewide**

- New Hampshire Economic Review 2015. (New Hampshire Division of Economic Development)

**New York Regional**

- Adirondack Regional Assessment Project (May 2009, update 2011)
- Advantage Adirondacks: Advancing Economic Opportunities Across the Adirondack Park (November 2014)
- Central New York Economic Development Council Strategic Plan
- Central New York Initiative: A Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Central New York (June 2013)
- Genesee-Finger Lakes Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update (2014-2015)
- Lake Champlain-Lake George Regional Planning Board 2011-2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Update (2011-2012)
- Mohawk Valley Economic Development Council Strategic Plan
- North Country Economic Development Council Strategic Plan

**New York Statewide**

- 2015 Regional Council Guidebook
- 2015 Upstate Revitalization Initiative Handbook

**Vermont Regional**

- Economic Development District of Northern Vermont CEDS 2015 - 2020
- Northeast Kingdom Regional Plan
- Northwest Regional Planning Commission Regional Plan
- Strategic Industries in the Northeast Kingdom (NVDA)

**Vermont Statewide**

- Vermont 2020 CEDS